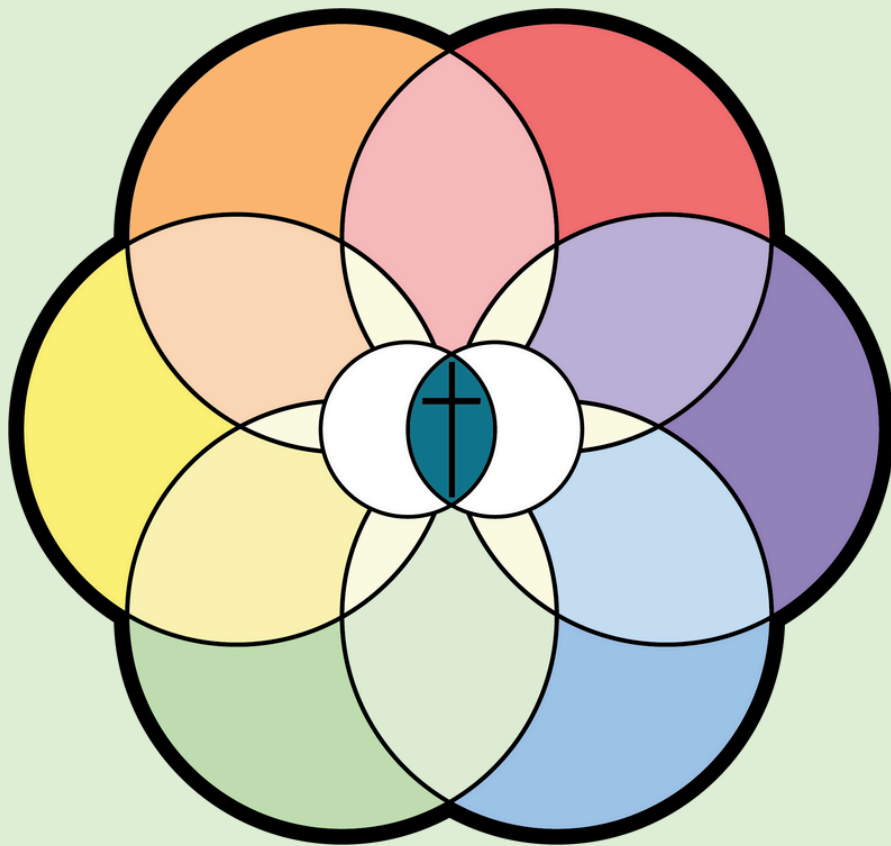


6261

MINISTRY COMMUNITIES

CALL PROCESS



...bundled together in common life, ministry, and mission.



Table of Contents:

- 3** What is a 6261 Ministry Community?
- 4** STEP-by-STEP Overview of 6261 Call Process
- 6** FULL Flowchart for 6261 Call Process
- 7** SUMMARY Flowchart for 6261 Call Process
- 8** Characteristics of Congregations in a 6261 Ministry Community
- 9** Expectations of Congregations in a 6261 Ministry Community
- 10** Characteristics of Pastors, Deacons, and LLMs in a 6261 Ministry Community
- 11** Expectations of Pastors, Deacons, and LLMs in a 6261 Ministry Community
- 12** Mission Site Story (MSS)
- 15** Mission Site Story - Appendix A
- 17** 6261 Call Process in FULL DETAIL
- 20** NOTES on the 6261 Call Process
- 22** Adaptations for Ecumenical 6261 Ministry Communities

WHAT

WHAT is a 6261 Ministry Community?

6261 Ministry Communities are groups of **6** congregations served by **2** full-time pastors, **6** synod-licensed lay ministers, and **1** full-time deacon for shared ministry within their community.

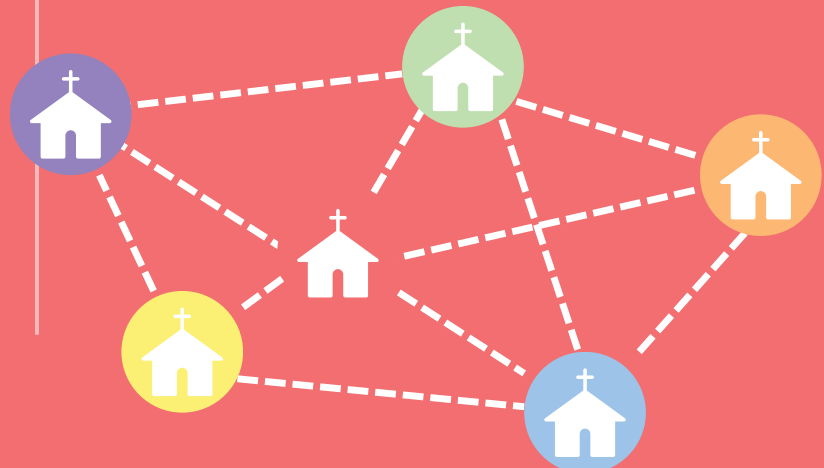


6 Congregations
2 Pastors
6 Licensed Lay Ministers
1 Deacon

The goal is that each 6261 Ministry Community will be bundled together in common life, ministry, and mission. For many, this is a cultural, paradigm shift. Leaders work in co-partnership with one another and across the 6 congregations for the purpose of deeply rooted, shared, vital, and sustainable ministry within the community.

Each 6261 Ministry Community will be formed around at least one primary ministry project. This core, ministry focus will be embedded in its community and that community's context to address specific areas of human suffering by building relationships and encountering mutual transformation. This is one way we can do more together than alone as we seek to LOVE, HEAL, and ENGAGE like Jesus.

Whatever the passion and contextual need, a 6261 Ministry Community can commit to this profound work for the sake of the Gospel and one another.





STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW OF 6261 CALL PROCESS

1. Meet with your Associate to the Bishop and form a Joint Call Committee.
2. Complete the Mission Site Story (MSS) as a 6261 Ministry Community.
 - a. Each congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community completes "Appendix A" individually. The Joint Call Committee compiles them.
 - b. See note below for additional ELCA posting option.
3. Meet with your Associate to the Bishop along with the Bishop to review your completed MSS.
4. Receive names and paperwork of potential Rostered Minister candidates.
5. Conduct review of paperwork and associated materials and conduct interviews with potential Rostered Minister candidates until find preferred candidate.
6. Consult with the Engagement Team and each individual Congregational Council regarding the preferred candidate. If in agreement, invite the preferred candidate for an initial onsite interview.
7. Preferred candidate attends initial onsite interview.
8. Following the initial onsite interview, each Congregation Council votes to recommend the preferred candidate to their congregation for full congregational approval.
 - a. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required from each Congregational Council for the preferred candidate to receive recommendation.
 - b. The preferred candidate is given up to two (2) weeks to discern if they wish to let their name go forward with the process.
9. If the above requirements are met, the Joint Call Committee schedules a second onsite interview with the preferred candidate and each congregation is given proper notice of the full congregational meeting during which the call vote will be held. If the above requirements are not met, the Joint Call Committee returns to Step 3 or Step 4 and resumes the Call Process therewith.



STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW OF 6261 CALL PROCESS

10. Preferred candidate attends second onsite interview which includes a “Meet & Greet” for all congregational members of the 6261 Ministry Community as well as a Joint Worship Service in which the preferred candidate takes an appropriate worship leadership role.

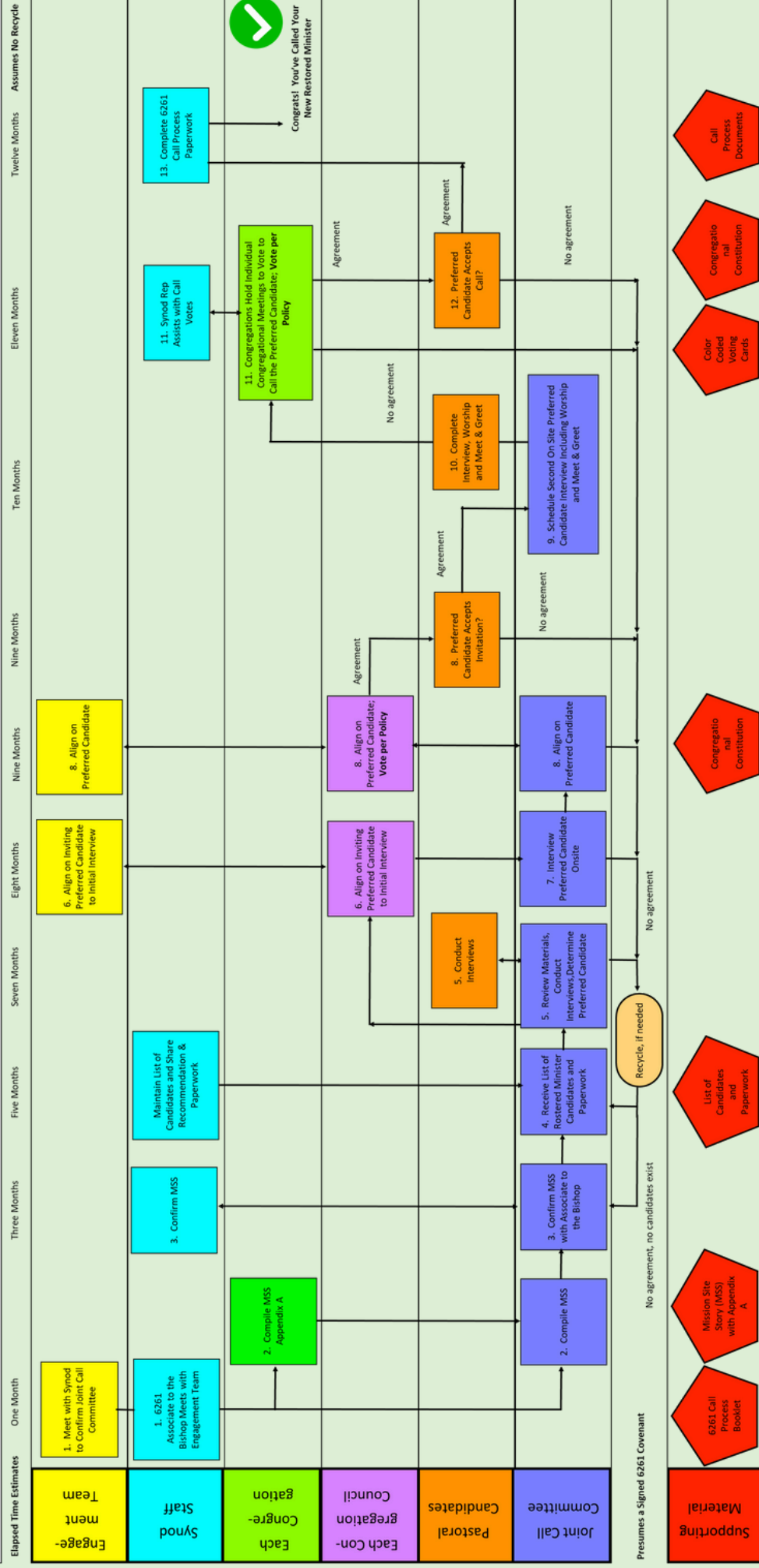
11. Each congregation holds a full congregational meeting and votes to call the preferred candidate. Ideally, these congregational meetings are held back-to-back.

a. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required by each congregation to approve the candidate for call to the 6261 Ministry Community.

12. The preferred candidate has thirty (30) days to accept the call in writing.

13. If the preferred candidate accepts the call, the NEPA Synod works with the 6261 Ministry Community to finalize paperwork and formally complete the Call Process! If the preferred candidate does not accept the call, the Joint Call Committee returns to Step 3 or Step 4 and resumes the Call Process therewith.

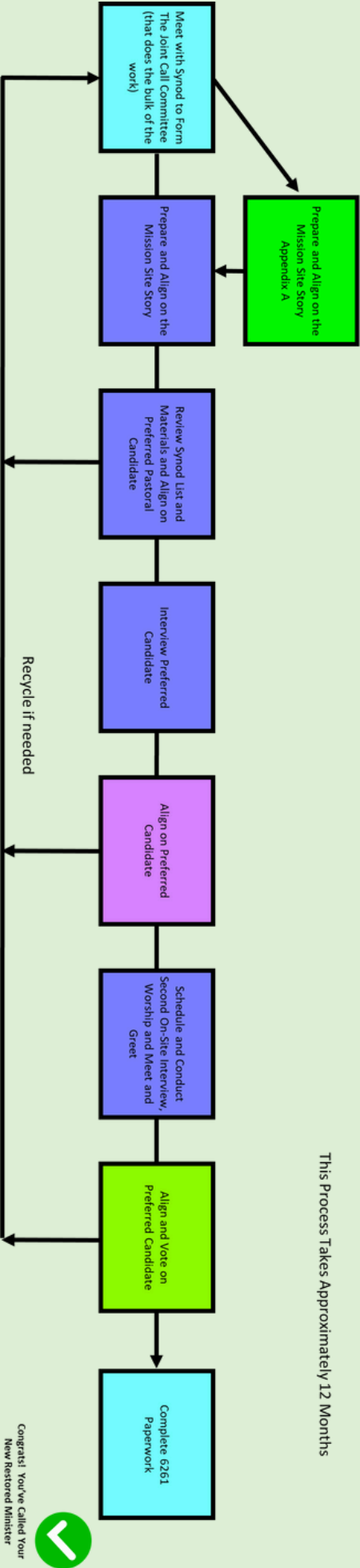
Proposed Call Process for 6261 Ministry Communities NEPA Synod



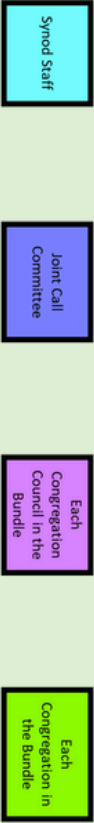
Process Author: Kat Tigerman

Date: 12 August 2025

Summary Call Process for 6261 Ministry Communities: NEPA Synod



Colors Indicate & Match the Accountable Party in the Detail SWIM Lane Process





CHARACTERISTICS

of each Congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community

- Openness to sharing a common life of ministry and mission - inside and outside their walls - to be transformed by the neighbor and each other.
- Willingness to share pastors, deacons, lay ministers, and administrative staff.
- Call and capacity to lift up local leaders to serve as lay ministers.
- Geographic proximity, ideally within 15-25 minutes of the other 5 congregations in its 6261 Ministry Community.
- Focus on our common synodical goals of: Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life.
- Approval by its congregational council and written commitment to participate in the 6261 Ministry Community. This includes appointing 2 members to serve on the 6261 Ministry Community Joint Council.
- Willingness to actively participate in Congregational Learning Opportunities.

of each Congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community

- Prays for the 6261 Ministry Community – the shared ministry, the staff, the 6 congregations and their members, and all who encounter it.
- Supports its staff (pastors, deacon, and lay ministers) with grace and flexibility.
- Encourages, prays for, and supports the lay ministers within the congregation and the 6261 Ministry Community, accompanying them on their journey and training through the LLM formation path.
- Remains open to trying new things, new types of ministry, and incorporating technology where and as needed.
- Commits to meeting neighbors of the community and forming relationships, based in the knowledge that all people are created in God's image. Completes a demographic study/review when desired and beneficial.
- Works with staff to ensure vital, authentic, creative worship that nourishes souls and empowers worshippers to live out their faith in their everyday lives in the community. Openness to a variety of worship materials and worshipping in languages other than English.
- Appoints 2 members of the congregation to serve on the 6261 Ministry Community Joint Council. Supports these 2 members in prayer, relationship, and participation.
- Actively participates in the biannual Congregational Learning Opportunities. Ensures the 2 Joint Council members are able to attend the annual 6261 Ministry Community Joint Council retreat. Promotes, advertises, and works with Synod staff to host and participate in "God's Work Our Hands" Sunday service sharing day.
- Financially supports and budgets ongoing support of 2 pastors and 1 deacon, including benefits, housing, and cost of living adjustments. Financially supports lay ministers with scholarships and mileage reimbursement for the LLM formation path as well as budgets appropriate compensation of lay ministers for Sunday worship leadership.

of each Congregational Council of the 6261 Ministry Community

- The Congregational Council and the 6261 Ministry Community Joint Council commit to praying regularly for one another and listening to how the others hear the Spirit calling the 6261 Ministry Community into shared ministry.
- The Congregational Council attends all Coaching sessions, whether scheduled adhering to an already scheduled Council meeting or scheduled as a separate session. The Council commits to working hard through issues that bubble up, to being honest and open to direction from the Coach, and reliant upon the Holy Spirit to guide the process.
- The Congregational Council commits to intentionally reaching out to Council members from the other 5 congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community to build relationships.
- The Congregational Council members nominate and encourages the congregation to nominate members to serve on the 6261 Ministry Community Joint Council.
- The Congregational Council communicates regularly and transparently with the congregation concerning 6261 Ministry Community happenings and ministries.

When looking for a Deacon, Pastor, or LLM, it can help to have some general attributes to look for:

of each Pastor & Deacon serving a 6261 Ministry Community

- Spiritually grounded, rooted in Scripture and spiritual practices
- Strong sense of collegiality and willingness to share authority: the 6261 model of relationship and leadership is “co” versus senior/associate across pastor and deacon roles
- Supportive of lay ministers, with capacity to mentor and supervise them
- Emphasizes and leads ministry in the community, outside church walls
- Creative, adaptive, visionary, open to new things; outside-the-box thinker who sees the big picture
- Open to feedback and failure; not set back when ideas don’t work perfectly the first try
- Humble; willing to experience transformation by the Spirit and in encounters with others
- Good time management skills & ability to track multiple things across the 6
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Experience leading ministry sites in cultural, structural transformation – or willingness to learn and be coached
- Ability to preach, lead, design, coordinate vibrant and authentic worship
- Self-aware of gifts and limitations; is committed to ongoing growth
- Ability to help congregations process conflict, grief, anxiety, and a sense of the unknown

of each Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) serving a 6261 Ministry Community

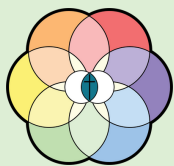
- Spiritually grounded, rooted in Scripture and spiritual practices
- Sense of vocation
- Willingness, time, and capacity to participate in the LLM formation path
- Willing to receive feedback and mentoring as a part of continued professional and spiritual growth
- Self-aware and committed to ongoing learning and personal growth
- Understanding of worship participation and leadership
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Welcoming, hospitable, inviting presence to all; avoids subgrouping/cliques
- Adaptable, comfortable with new things
- Speaks honestly and will curb gossip
- Member of an ELCA congregation, preferably within the NEPA Synod

of each Pastor & Deacon serving a 6261 Ministry Community

- Fully and actively participates in the Gaining Strength Cohort, incorporating learnings and utilizing tools to enable cultural transformation of the 6261 Ministry Community.
- Works collegially with other members of the 6261 Ministry Community's staff (pastors, deacons, lay ministers) and leads decision-making with a consensus model amongst staff.
- Does not prioritize or favor any one particular congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community and diligently works to develop relationships across all 6 congregations.
- In partnership with staff, leads and engages the 6261 Ministry Community to define its ministry vision and embeddedness within the surrounding community for shared ministry.
- Serves as a supervisor for lay ministers by accompanying lay ministers on their vocational journey. Provides time for training, discernment, and feedback to lay ministers. Attends LLM retreats when requested.
- Practices self-awareness and continued personal and vocational growth. Willing to take personality assessments, such as the Enneagram, for staff development.
- Attends weekly staff meetings and weekly staff coaching sessions.
- Attends Synod Assemblies, Bishop's Conferences, First Call Theological Education
- Maintains good and appropriate boundaries. Completes Boundary Training at least every 3 years and attends Racial Justice Training at least every 3 years.
- Completes continuing education for ongoing leadership and theological development.
- Works to integrate technology, where needed and appropriate.
- Manages conflict and handles toxic behaviors appropriately.

of each Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) serving a 6261 Ministry Community

- Actively participates in and completes the LLM formation path. This includes attending all 4 retreats over the 2-year program.
- Upon completion of the LLM formation path, engages in continuing education for ongoing leadership and theological development. This includes participating in regular Boundary Training and Racial Justice Training.
- Continues on-going discernment for vocational, spiritual, and personal growth, which may include utilizing coaching or spiritual direction.
- Works collaboratively and collegially with the other staff of the 6261 Ministry Community (pastors, deacon, lay ministers) and attends weekly staff meetings and weekly staff coaching sessions.
- Provides worship leadership within his/her "home" congregation, including preaching, on a regular basis as established by the 6261 Ministry Community.
- Builds relationships and bridges within "home" congregation and across the congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community.
- In partnership with staff, leads and engages the 6261 Ministry Community to define its ministry vision and embeddedness within the surrounding community for mutual ministry.
- Works to integrate technology, where needed and appropriate.



MISSION SITE STORY

This document differs from the Ministry Site Profile that gets uploaded to the ELCA portal. The purpose of the Mission Site Story is to provide a joint sense of vision and mission of the 6261 Ministry Community to the wider world and potential rostered minister candidates.

WHO WE ARE

Name of your 6261 Ministry Community:

Names and Locations of Congregations within the 6261 Ministry Community:

Contact Information (Phone number and Email) of all Congregational Presidents:

Names of Licensed Lay Ministers (or LLM Candidates) and congregations: Where are they in the licensing process?

Current Rostered Ministers (with their Emails):

Other paid staff of the 6261 Ministry Community (position title and number of hours):

We hope to call:

- ☐ Deacon
- ☐ Pastor
- ☐ Pastor

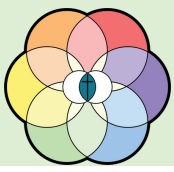
OUR NEIGHBORS

Share 3-5 key insights from the 6261 Ministry Community demographic study.

List 3 changes within your congregations' communities within the past 3-5 years.

What changes do you want to see in the surrounding communities because of the 6261 Ministry Community? Is your Primary Ministry Project addressing any of these desired changes?

How does being a Lutheran faith community make a difference to your neighbors?



MISSION SITE STORY

OUR 6261 MINISTRY COMMUNITY

What excites your congregations/ministry sites about being part of a 6261 Ministry Community? What is something you want to try as a 6261 Ministry Community?

What does being part of a 6261 Ministry Community help you do together that you can't do alone?

Share a recent hurdle you have experienced as a 6261 Ministry Community and any ways you've worked toward jumping that hurdle.

What Bible passages/hymns/prayers have grounding for your congregations as you've gone through the process so far?

OUR NEXT ROSTERED MINISTER(S): Deacon and Pastors

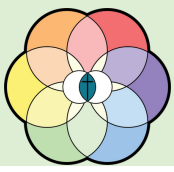
How does your 6261 Ministry Community envision using the Word and Service gifts of a deacon?

How does your 6261 Ministry Community envision using the Word and Sacrament gifts of a pastor?

What specific gifts/skills would be beneficial for the deacon/pastor(s) to have (especially ones joining an existing ministry staff)?

How will the 6261 Ministry Community specifically support the pastor(s) in their ministry?

How will the 6261 Ministry Community specifically support the deacon in their ministry?



MISSION SITE STORY

OUR INTER-CONNECTIONS

How does the 6261 Ministry Community specifically support its Licensed Lay Ministers in their ministry?

As a 6261 Ministry Community, how will you be an active participant in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Northeastern PA Synod?

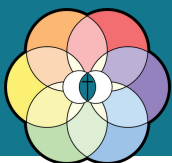
How is your Primary Ministry Project helping the 6261 Bundle to “Love, Heal, and Engage” within the surrounding community?*

Who are some of your partners in ministry? (non-profits, congregations not in this 6261 Ministry Community, Ecumenical partners, Lutheran organizations, etc.)

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

When submitting this MSS, please also attach the following documents:

1. A copy of your 6261 Ministry Community Covenant
2. The Bundle budget for this 6261 Ministry Community
3. Appendix A for each of the congregations (and SAWCs) comprising this 6261 Ministry Community



APPENDIX A

CURRENT SNAPSHOT

Name of Congregation:

Address of Congregation:

Staff Employed by the Congregation (not the 6261 Ministry Community), including position title and number of hours:

Share about your worship services (when, where, style, etc.):

Average Sunday Worship Attendance:

Age Distribution of Regular Worshippers:

Age 0-18:

Age 65-75:

Age 18-30:

Age 75-85:

Age 30-45:

Age 85 + :

Age 45-65:

Community Type (check all that apply):

- ☐ Bedroom Community
- ☐ College or University
- ☐ Farming
- ☐ Inner City
- ☐ Mining/lodging
- ☐ Ranching
- ☐ Industrial
- ☐ Resort
- ☐ Retirement

Race/Ethnicity of Surrounding Community:

Largest:

Second:

Third:

Fourth:

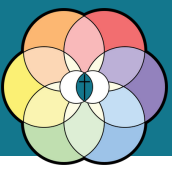
Race/Ethnicity of Congregation:

Largest:

Second:

Third:

Fourth:



APPENDIX A

CURRENT SNAPSHOT (Continued)

Languages Spoken in the Congregation:

Primary:

Second:

Others:

Languages Spoken in the Surrounding Community:

Primary:

Second:

Others:

Amount in Current Account:

Amount in Savings/Reserve/Endowment:

List of Debts: (Mortgage(s)/Lien/Judgement/Liabilities)

Amount of Yearly Surplus (Deficit):

Deferred Maintenance Projects:

History of Synod Assembly Attendance:

Congregational Officers and Length of Service:

How are your facilities typically used throughout the week? How are they utilized by the 6261 Ministry Community?

Share about some of the ministries and events that are unique to your congregation.

Call Process in FULL DETAIL

The process for calling a Rostered Minister (Deacon or Pastor) to the 6261 Ministry Community mirrors the traditional process of a single congregation or yoked congregations calling a Rostered Minister. The Associate to the Bishop for your Mission District will assist you throughout the call process.

CALL COMMITTEE:

First a Call Committee will be formed. The Call Committee will consist of 1 member from each of the 6261 congregations, along with a member of the Steering Committee of any SAWCs or SAOMs who are a part of the 6261 Ministry Community. Members of the Engagement Team are not eligible to serve on the Call Committee.

MISSION SITE STORY (MSS):

In lieu of completing a Ministry Site Profile (MSP), the 6261 Ministry Community Call Committee will complete a Mission Site Story (MSS) which gathers information on the 6261 Ministry Community as a whole along with an appendix that reflects each congregation's unique demographics, worship styles, building(s), and budget. Once completed, the Call Committee submits the MSS to the Synod office.

INTERVIEW PROCESS:

Then the Call Committee is given the paperwork of interested and qualified Rostered Ministers. The Call Committee reviews the paperwork, holds interviews with candidates, and reviews worship leadership materials/recordings until it finds their preferred candidate, at which point the Call Committee makes a recommendation to the Engagement Team.

Upon review and consultation with each Congregational Council, the Engagement Team may invite the preferred candidate for an initial onsite interview. The initial onsite interview would include time with the Call Committee, Engagement Team, each Congregational Council (and SAWC and/or SAOM Steering Committee), 6261 Ministry Community staff, and tours of each church facility. **17**

INTERVIEW PROCESS (Continued):

Following the initial onsite interview, each Congregational Council will meet to discuss and then hold a vote on whether to recommend the preferred candidate to their congregation for full congregational approval. It is appropriate to include Engagement Team members from the congregation during this discussion. The Congregational Council can determine if the Engagement Team members have voice only or also vote for the preferred candidate recommendation. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required from each Congregational Council for the candidate to receive recommendation. If the candidate receives recommendation, the candidate is then provided time (no more than two weeks) to discern whether they wish to move forward with the process by allowing their name to go forward to the full congregations for a vote.

If the preferred candidate receives recommendation from each Congregational Council and allows their name to go forward in the process, the Call Committee schedules a second onsite interview. There may be additional interviews with the Call Committee, Engagement Team, or others as determined by the Call Committee in consultation with the Engagement Team. The second onsite interview should include a “meet and greet” time open to all members of congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community for an informal time to interact with the preferred candidate. The Call Committee should also coordinate a joint worship service for the preferred candidate to provide an experience of worship leadership (preaching, presiding, and/or assisting as appropriate for the call and their roster). The joint worship service should be announced and communicated to all of the 6261 Ministry Community congregations well in advance so that as many members as possible may attend. The joint worship service may be held at one of the 6261 Ministry Community congregations or at a neutral site.

VOTING TO CALL:

As soon as possible following the second onsite interview – ideally, immediately following the joint worship service – each congregation will need to hold a full congregational vote to call the preferred candidate. The Council President of each congregation will need to ensure a quorum for their congregation before calling the congregational meeting to order. The motion to call the preferred candidate for the Rostered Minister position to the pre-identified calling body (congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community or NEPA Synod) then comes before the congregational assembly from the Congregational Council. Ushers will collect the ballots and the pre-determined counters will count the ballots in a private space to determine the outcome of the vote.

6261 Ministry Communities are encouraged to coordinate the scheduling of back-to-back congregational meetings with the Associate to the Bishop for your Mission District and/or the Executive Associate for Leadership so that the votes can take place efficiently, orderly, and as simultaneously as possible. Per Constitutional requirements, a Synod representative will need to be present for each congregational vote.

If the congregational votes are held back-to-back at the same location, color-coded ballots will be used to identify the votes of each congregation. Each congregational meeting would still need to be called to order but they could take place sequentially with one congregational meeting (and vote) occurring immediately following the other. Once all the congregations have voted and the ballots have been collected, the counters separate the ballots by color (i.e. by congregation) and count the votes. It is highly recommended that there be three (3) counters and that they each be a member of a different congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community. The counters will need to present the results of the vote. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required by each congregation to approve the candidate for call to the 6261 Ministry Community.

CANDIDATE ACCEPTANCE:

If the candidate is approved for call, the candidate is immediately notified and then given up to thirty (30) days to accept the call in writing. This requirement for the candidate to accept the call in writing remains even if the candidate verbally accepts the call on the day of the vote.

NOTES ON THE 6261 CALL PROCESS

- A) Any expenses incurred for onsite interviews should be paid out of the 6261 Ministry Community joint budget and joint account.
- B) Along with completing the MSS, the Joint Call Committee may choose to have a congregation fill out an ELCA Ministry Site Profile (MSP). Within the form, the Joint Call Committee would need to state that this call is serving a 6261 Ministry Community (and list the other congregations in the 6261 Ministry Community) in the NEPA Synod and that it has a separate call document – which interested candidates can request by contacting the NEPA Synod directly. Additional information, including attaching each “Appendix A” from the MSS for each congregation can be listed under Box 8 of the MSP. Completing this MSP form allows the call opening to be listed on the ELCA website for “Call Openings.” The advantage of this is that the call to the 6261 Ministry Community becomes searchable throughout the ELCA Community portal (i.e. the wider church).
- C) Regarding the use of color-coded ballots: There would be one color per congregation to allow for easy identification of votes per congregation. It would be a good idea for the Joint Call Committee to have a list of what color has been assigned to which congregation. To further facilitate the voting process during each congregational meeting, it would be best if congregations could sit together so that ballots may be easily distributed and collected. The BALLOTS need to list the name of the congregation, the name of the rostered minister being called, the name of the position to which the rostered minister is being called including the roster (“Word & Sacrament” for pastors OR “Word & Service” for deacons), and the name of the calling body. There also needs to be a box labeled “YES” and a box labeled “NO” on each ballot so that people can vote by checking one of the boxes.

NOTES ON THE 6261 CALL PROCESS

D) Each Congregational Council President will need to call that congregation's meeting to order.

E) The MOTION to call the rostered minister will need to include the name of the rostered minister, specifying a call to which roster ("Word & Sacrament" for pastors OR "Word & Service" for deacons), the name of the 6261 Ministry Community being served, and the name of the specified call-holder for that rostered minister's call. The call-holder could be one of the congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community or the NEPA Synod.

F) A simple way the votes can be held back-to-back:

Congregation A Council President calls the congregational meeting to order. The Motion comes before the congregation ("assembly") from the Congregational Council. Members of the congregation vote on their colored ballot. Ushers collect the ballots. The meeting is adjourned. Congregation B repeats the process, then Congregation C, and so forth until all congregations have held their meeting and completed their votes.



Adaptations for Episcopal – ELCA 6261 Ministry Communities

1. There are not two (2) sets of onsite interviews. The “initial” onsite interview serves as the only onsite interview. The Joint Call Committee may hold as many phone and Zoom interviews prior to the onsite interview as they so choose. *
2. Following the onsite interview, each ELCA Congregational Council and Episcopal Parish Vestry meet, discuss, and vote on the candidate. The Episcopal vestries are voting on whether or not to call the candidate. The ELCA councils are voting on whether to recommend the candidate to their congregation for full congregational approval. A simple majority of vestry members present (assuming a quorum has been met) is needed for Episcopal vestries to approve the candidate. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is needed for ELCA councils to approve the candidate for recommendation. Should any vestry or council vote not to call or recommend the candidate, the candidate is eliminated and the Joint Call Committee resumes the call process with new candidates.
3. Once a candidate has received approval from each vestry and approval from each council (to go before the full congregation), a “meet and greet” and joint worship service are scheduled.
4. All members are invited to the “meet and greet.”
5. All members are additionally invited to the joint worship service, which will be held at a neutral site and not at any congregation/parish of the 6261 Ministry Community. Immediately following the joint worship service, only the ELCA councils stay and hold their congregational votes, individually but back-to-back. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required by each ELCA congregation to approve the candidate for call to the 6261 Ministry Community. If any congregation does not approve the candidate, the Joint Call Committee resumes the call process with new candidates.
6. If the candidate is Episcopalian, the Episcopal Bishop is notified of the selection and the Episcopal Bishop extends the call. If the candidate is ELCA, the ELCA Bishop is notified of the selection and works with the candidate and the 6261 Ministry Community to determine who will issue the call (either the NEPA Synod or one of the ELCA congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community).

Adaptations for Episcopal – ELCA 6261 Ministry Communities

7. ELCA candidates are given thirty (30) days to accept the call in writing. If an ELCA candidate does not accept the call, then the Joint Call Committee resumes the call process with new candidates. Contracts for ELCA candidates are coordinated between the ELCA NEPA Synod, Joint Call Committee, and the clergy candidate. In some cases, especially if relocation is necessitated, Episcopal candidates may receive an interim Memorandum of Understanding (start date and compensation package information only), which is signed by the Senior Warden and the clergy candidate. The signing of the interim Memorandum of Understanding constitutes official acceptance of the call and allows for the public announcement of such acceptance. In all cases, Episcopal candidates receive a Letter of Agreement, which is executed between the Senior Warden, Episcopal Bishop, and the clergy candidate. (If the Episcopal Candidate has received an interim Memorandum of Understanding, the Letter of Agreement will follow). Please note that an Episcopal priest can begin ministry service prior to the Episcopal Bishop's signature on the Letter of Agreement.

Throughout the call process, the Joint Call Committee and Engagement Team will make every effort to help the congregations and parishes understand the theological background, training, and experience of the candidate, especially how much the candidate knows about “being Lutheran” or “being Episcopalian.” After any call has been approved and issued, the Engagement Team will continue to help the candidate and the congregations/parishes have the grace, space, and understanding that the other may not know how to be as “ELCA” or “Episcopalian” as they do.

** The background check process remains the same during the joint call process and remains the responsibility of the ordaining body of the potential candidate. The timing of background checks differs slightly between the Episcopal Church and the ELCA but under no circumstances, would any rostered or licensed clergy be offered a call or employment to a 6261 Ministry Community without satisfactorily passing all background checks, Safe Church training, boundaries training, and racial justice trainings.*